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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4085
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH 2088
RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 2115
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK 2091
RUEHMOS/REO MOSUL 2092
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUZCDAB/MNC-I BAGHDAD IQ
RUZCDAA/MNF-I BAGHDAD IQ
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001351

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD GOVERNOR CONCERNED ABOUT PROVINCIAL
SECURITY TRANSITION

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Classified By: PRT LEADER JOSPEH P. GREGOIRE FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: Baghdad provincial governor Hussein Mohammed Al-Tahan indicated in an April 19 meeting with Baghdad PRT staff that Baghdad's security forces are not ready to take full responsibility for Baghdad's provincial security without significant Coalition support. Al-Tahan expressed doubts about the feasibility of weapons recovery programs in Baghdad and explained his oversight of the issuance of weapon permits in the province. END SUMMARY.

Coordination Inadequate

¶2. (S) On April 19, Baghdad PRT staff met with Governor Al-Tahan to discuss performance indicators that MND-B is using to complete a Provincial Security Transition Assessment. As governor of Baghdad Province, Al-Tahan plays a prominent role in provincial security. Al-Tahan expressed concern that his coordination with other provincial security elements is not adequate. He said he lacks an official mechanism to coordinate security efforts with all members of MOI, MOD, Coalition Forces, and other local security agencies. He went on that national government entities, particularly MOI and MOD, are not sufficiently responsive to the provincial leadership, particularly to the governor's office. Al Tahan said no area in Baghdad is ready to be turned over to Iraqi security forces although Rusafa may be closest to being ready. (Comment: The Governor and a representative of the Provincial Council (PC) participate in the weekly Baghdad security coordination meeting run by MND-B, and the provincial leadership maintains liaison officers at the Baghdad Joint Coordination Center. In both, the Governor and the PC representative discuss and coordinate security issues with MOI, MOD, and Coalition Force leaders. End Comment.)

What Militias?

¶3. (S) Speaking more generally about the security situation, Al-Tahan said terrorism and violence have been rising in Baghdad during the last several months. He flatly denied,

however, the existence of militia elements operating anywhere in the province, saying he would be "happy to round them up" if the Coalition Forces were to identify them. (Comment: Al-Tahan's statement reflected previous remarks he had made disputing Ambassador Khalilzad's statement that militias have been responsible for more deaths than terrorists have in recent months. End Comment.)

Weapons Recovery Programs Won,t Work, Yet

14. (S) Al-Tahan also discussed the weapons collection programs being implemented in Baghdad by Coalition Forces. He said that although "there are far too many guns in Baghdad," individuals and families feel they need weapons for their protection and thus are unlikely to participate in any such program until security improves.

Al-Tahan Responsible for Weapons Permits

15. (S) Al-Tahan reviewed the provincial weapons permit registration system and noted that the Governor's Office has the sole authority in Baghdad province to issue "regular" weapons permits. (MOI continues to issue permits to security forces.) He explained that his office maintains detailed files on each applicant and denies about 95 percent of all applications. According to Al Tahan, he personally approves and signs each permit issued. When asked by PRT staff to whom permits are being granted, Al-Tahan said "average citizens" and did not elaborate further.

Comment

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16. (S) Governor Al-Tahan is a senior member of the Badr Corps. Many of his remarks suggest that his office is being used to extend Badr Corps influence over security infrastructure in Baghdad province. This would not be surprising given the many reports we have received of Badr Corps activities in the Rusafa district. We do not know how many of the weapons permits issued by Al-Tahan are being accepted by MOI or whether MOI is restricting regular civilians from receiving MOI permits. What is clear is that Al-Tahan,s control suggests the process may not be functioning in an unbiased fashion.
KHALILZAD